DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 537 IR 057 039

AUTHOR Useem, Elizabeth; Coe, Cati
TITLE Library Power in Philadelphia: Final Report from Seven Case Studies.
INSTITUTION Philadelphia Education Fund, PA.
PUB DATE 1998-04-00
NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (April 13-17, 1998, San Diego, CA).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Curriculum Development; Educational Finance; *Elementary Schools; Elementary Secondary Education; Librarian Teacher Cooperation; *Library Development; *Library Funding; *Middle Schools; Program Development; *School Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Philadelphia School District PA

ABSTRACT

Library Power seeks to activate an underutilized resource--a school's library program--in ways that promote schoolwide changes in the curriculum and instruction. This three-year initiative of the DeWitt Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund, located in 19 sites across the country, connects elementary and middle school libraries more directly to classroom learning. Library Power in Philadelphia, a joint effort of the Philadelphia Education Fund and the School District of Philadelphia, began with a cohort of 11 schools midway through the 1994-95 academic year and added a second cohort of 19 schools the following year. This report adds a seventh case study site to an earlier report of six of these schools (1996) and documents the program impact through the summer 1997. All of the seven subject schools had implemented at least some of the key components of the Library Power initiative. Three of the schools achieved most of the program's objectives, another two made important strides in that direction, and two were classified as relatively low in their level of implementation. Overall accomplishments, factors explaining variations in program implementation, policy issues, and the future of Library Power are all discussed. (AEF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 419 537

Library Power in Philadelphia:

Final Report from Seven Case Studies

Elizabeth Useem
Philadelphia Education Fund

Cati Coe
University of Pennsylvania

Paper Presented at
the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association

April, 1998
San Diego, California

Philadelphia Education Fund
7 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Suite 700
Philadelphia, PA 19066
215-665-1400 x3323

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Elizabeth Useem
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Library Power in Philadelphia: Final Report from Seven Case Studies

Elizabeth Useem
Philadelphia Education Fund

Cati Coe
University of Pennsylvania

Library Power seeks to activate an underutilized resource—a school's library program—in ways that promote schoolwide changes in curriculum and instruction. This three-year initiative of the DeWitt Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund, located in 19 sites across the country, connects elementary and middle-school libraries more directly to classroom learning. It does this by promoting collaborative planning between teachers and the librarian, by building a collection of materials that dovetail with teachers' instructional units, and by making the library a much more attractive and accessible space. In Library Power schools, librarians are key partners in teaching and in developing connections to parents and community groups.

Library Power in Philadelphia, a joint effort of the Philadelphia Education Fund and the School District of Philadelphia, began with a cohort of 11 schools midway through the 1994-95 academic year and added a second cohort of 19 schools the following year. An earlier report of six of these schools documented the initiative's progress through the summer of 1996. This report adds a seventh case study site and documents program impact through the summer of 1997. An external program evaluation of the entire effort, commissioned by DeWitt Wallace-Readers' Digest and conducted by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will be available in 1998.

The case study sites were chosen to represent differing levels of program implementation. Multiple methods of data collection were employed at schools deemed to be at high, medium, and comparatively low levels of implementation. These methods include focus groups of participating librarians, ethnographic observations, personal interviews with librarians and principals over a two-year period, program documents, library records of book circulation, and logs of teacher collaboration.

Program Impact

All of the seven subject schools had implemented at least some of the key components of the Library Power initiative. Three of the schools achieved most of the program's objects, another two had made important strides in that direction, and two were classified as relatively low in their level of implementation. Overall, accomplishments included the following:

- The collections of books and other materials have been updated and expanded in ways that match the units taught by teachers in the school. Outdated books have been discarded;

- Teachers and librarians have begun to work collaboratively in planning and teaching specific units that require students to conduct research;

- Librarians have participated in sustained and intensive professional development that resulted in observable changes in their daily practice;

- The schools' libraries have been redesigned and refurbished in ways that make them much more inviting and useful;

- Students in five out of the seven schools now check out books on their own, unaided by the librarian;

- The practice of having whole classes visit the library on a weekly or biweekly fixed schedule has been abandoned and replaced by flexible use of the library as needed by individuals, small groups, or whole classes;

- Library Power librarians have formed a new professional network now available to provide training elsewhere in the School District.

- Partnerships between school libraries and community and parent organizations have increased.

Evidence on changes in the frequency of student visits to the library and changes in book circulation rates reveals a mixed picture. Under the old system of inflexible but regular whole-class trips to the library in elementary schools, the great majority of students came to the library weekly or biweekly. In Library Power schools, students come on an as-needed basis for research, book checkout, browsing and the like. Thus, those students who come to the library use it more productively than was the case in the past, but a certain percentage of other students visit the library less frequently than in the past. The same is true for book circulation. While circulation appears to have increased in two of the seven schools, in others it is about the same or a little higher. It appears that students who are library consumers are more enthusiastic about book selection and reading than in the past, but some no longer come to the library now that scheduled class visits have ended.

Factors Explaining Variations in Program Implementation

Four factors explain the degree and speed with which Library Power was implemented in a school. High levels of implementation were reached when:

- The principal actively supported the initiative;

- The librarian embraced the effort with energy and skill;

- The school's student enrollment was small or medium-sized;
- The school had a pre-existing collegial culture focused on improved student learning.

Policy Issues

Library Power ran up against many of the barriers commonly found in complex school change projects in urban districts. Budget shortfalls in the District limited its ability to fully support Library Power's implementation and institutionalization. Personnel issues posed problems as well: frequent turnover of school administrators; the presence of large numbers of new teachers; and, when schools could not attract substitute teachers, the tendency to pressure librarians to cover the classes of absent teachers. The lack of time for collegial interaction and planning during the school day, a perennial issue for change efforts, also interfered with team building and collaboration in the schools. Finally, until its final months, the initiative struggled to gain visibility in a large district with scores of reform programs.

The Future of Library Power

The initiative will continue in Philadelphia beyond the original grant period. The DeWitt Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund has awarded a $40,000 grant to the Philadelphia Education Fund for 1997-98 to pay for continued professional development activities for the Library Power librarians. In 28 of the 30 Library Power schools, sufficient school funds were allocated to maintain a full time librarian and to allow for participation in continued professional development activities. Moreover, thirteen additional schools are joining the initiative, funding the effort with their own school budgets or with other money available through the District. This spontaneous dissemination is a testament to the effectiveness of the Library Power model.

Library Power's success can be attributed, in part, to the requirements of the grant imposed by the funder on the participating schools, strictures that required schools to comply with key features of the effort. Its appeal can also be attributed to its common-sense focus on student learning and on people's desire to work and learn in an attractive space with materials that support classroom assignments.

Library Power in Philadelphia: Final Report from Seven Case Studies

Introduction

> I see the library as the *heart* of the school. If you don't have a good library, you won't improve student achievement. (Library Power Principal)

> I'm not just checking out books and serving as a prep teacher. I'm a facilitator and collaborator with teachers and a change agent. We *made things happen*, we didn't just talk about it. (Library Power Librarian)

The Library Power initiative, a program designed and funded by the DeWitt Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund in 19 sites across the country, propels school change by moving the library to the center of teaching and learning. The idea behind the grants totaling $40 million was that elementary and middle-grade students would read more and carry out research more effectively if their libraries were accessible, inviting places with up-to-date collections that matched the enacted curriculum and were staffed by well-trained librarians who collaborated with classroom teachers in planning and teaching curricular units.

This report summarizes the impact of Library Power in seven of the 30 schools in the School District of Philadelphia that participated in the $1.2 million initiative. The program was a joint effort of the Philadelphia Education Fund, a private non-profit school reform organization, and the School District, with technical assistance provided by the American Library Association and the Public Education Network (PEN), the parent organization for local education funds of which the Philadelphia Education Fund is a member. Library Power in Philadelphia began with a cohort of 11 elementary and middle schools selected for participation midway through the 1994-95 school year and added a second cohort of 19 schools the following year. The three-year funding cycle concluded at the end of the 1996-97 school year but a small institutionalization grant ($40,000) from DeWitt Wallace and School District funds will allow professional development for the librarians to continue for an additional year.

The schools chosen as case study sites were selected to represent varying levels of implementation. As is the case with most school reform efforts, the fidelity of implementation differed across schools, a pattern documented in a preliminary report.[1] The findings presented here confirm those initial results. The effort continued to move forward in all the schools, though at a highly variable rate, and the comparative rankings on the schools' program effectiveness did not change. This report includes a more complete and refined evidence of impact of the program's key components, further explication of the factors accounting for differing degrees of success among schools, a discussion of the initiative's connection to the movement for higher academic standards, and the district-wide policy barriers that slowed implementation.

---

[1] Elizabeth Useem, *Library Power in Philadelphia: Preliminary Findings form Six Case Studies*. Philadelphia Education Fund, October, 1996.

Although this investigation focused on variations in success among schools, the more important conclusion of this and the preliminary study is that **substantial changes occurred in nearly all of the 30 schools**. Compared to many other school reform initiatives of its kind,[2] Library Power has had a more immediate and dramatic impact on educational resources and practices. Many librarians struck pay dirt in their school environments as they dug into the work required by the funder. They refurbished and redesigned the physical space, ordered new books and software, discarded obsolete materials, trained students to check out books by themselves and to use the library on a flexible basis, created community partnerships, encouraged teachers to articulate their long-term curriculum plans, and met with teachers to plan specific units.

Data and Methods

The Philadelphia Education Fund undertook this study after it became apparent that the complexities of Library Power implementation required in-depth qualitative research in order to gain genuine understanding of its impact. Although DeWitt Wallace-Readers' Digest commissioned a cross-site external evaluation by researchers at the University of Wisconsin's School of Library and Information Science,[3] the evaluation's case studies do not include Philadelphia schools and the survey data required of all sites do not give a full picture of the local context and outcomes.

Of the seven schools in Philadelphia chosen for study, three were deemed by the Fund's program staff as "high" in implementation of the initiative's program components; two were classified as "medium"; and two were regarded as "low" implementation sites.[4] These initial designations proved to be accurate as the study unfolded. This range allowed the evaluators to examine the factors that fostered program effectiveness. Four of the seven schools entered the initiative in 1994-95 and three joined the effort the following year. Two are middle schools and five are elementary schools. All have high concentrations of low income students.

The data for the study came from several sources:

- **Interviews with librarians**. Librarians were interviewed at three points in time: June, 1996; December-January, 1997; May, 1997. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour during the first two rounds and about 20 minutes in round three. In four of the schools, a collaborating teacher was also interviewed during the first round.

---

[2] See Elizabeth Useem, Jolley Christman, Eva Gold, and Elaine Simon, Reforming Alone: Barriers to Organizational Learning in Urban School Change Initiatives, *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1996, pp. 55-78.

[3] See Douglas L. Zweizig, Dianne McAfee Hopkins, and Debra Wilcox Johnson, *Report of Results of April 1995 Building-Level Survey of Library Power Library Media Specialists for Philadelphia: A Report to the Philadelphia Education Fund*. School of Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, July, 1996.

[4] The preliminary study included only six case studies. A seventh "high implementation" case was added for this report in order to get a better sense of the dynamics of well functioning programs. In this case, an intern from Bryn Mawr College had written a detailed case study based on intensive observations during the spring of 1996 and Elizabeth Useem had visited the site in May, 1996. Thus, baseline data on implementation for this school existed even though it was not part of the formal study in the first round of interviews. See Christina Ehlers, *Philadelphia Library Power: Seven Visions of Change at Mann Elementary School*, Bryn Mawr College, Report written for the Philadelphia Education Fund, April, 1996.

- **Interviews with principals**. Principals were interviewed in June, 1996 and again during the winter of 1996-97. The semi-structured interviews typically lasted 20 minutes.

- **Observation of professional development sessions**. A researcher attended a Library Power three-day summer institute in 1996 and selected professional development meetings for the librarians during the 1996-97 school year.

- **Focus groups**. Three focus groups of Library Power librarians drawn from all the schools were conducted in October and November, 1996. A total of 14 librarians met for an hour in one of three focus groups.

- **Observations in the libraries**. One of the researchers observed two full days in each of the case study libraries between January and March, 1997. She recorded the number of students and teachers using the library, the purpose of the visit, the quality of students' work, the interaction between the librarian, teachers, and children, and the general ambiance and condition of the library.

- **Observation of a collaborative project**. A researcher observed a collaborative project in one school unfold over a three week period in April and May, 1996, attending meetings of the librarian and teachers, watching the research process in the library and the classroom, and observing the culminating event of the project (8 visits in all).

- **Data collection of book circulation and teacher collaboration**. During the two observation days outlined above, the researcher counted the number of books in circulation at the time as well as the number checked out by students and teachers on each of the two observation days. Collaboration logs kept by the librarian were also examined in order to count the number of collaborations that had occurred during the year.

- **Document review**. The documents included librarians' annual reports, librarians' annual portfolios of their work, annual reports to the funder from the Library Power Director at the Philadelphia Education Fund, additional documentation (e.g. surveys of children) carried out voluntarily by selected librarians, and a survey of librarians conducted by the Library Power Director.

- **Content analysis of Mini-grant Proposals**. An intern from Swarthmore College analyzed the first and second rounds of librarians' proposals for mini-grant funding for special projects.[5]

- **Informal interviews with the Library Power Director** at the Philadelphia Education Fund. These took place throughout the course of the grant period.

---

[5] Laurie Gerber, *Library Power Mini-Grant Program Evaluation*, Swarthmore College, A Report for the Philadelphia Education Fund, May, 1997.

The Context: Libraries in the School District of Philadelphia

Library Power came to the nation's fifth largest school district (216,000 students) whose librarians and facilities were sorely in need of support. By any measure, the District's libraries were in desperate condition. A 1997 report written by the Association of Philadelphia School Librarians summarized the problems.[6]

- In 1995-96, the District spent only $4.50 per pupil for library materials (books, periodicals, videotapes, microfilm, software) compared to a 1993 national average of $20.42.
- Most of the District's school libraries are "unattractive places" with collections that are, on average, 20-25 years old.
- More than half of the District's elementary schools have no librarian. In those schools, paraprofessionals and volunteers oversee the library.
- Elementary school librarians spend 12 to 20 weekly periods (equivalent to 2-3 school days) covering classes for teachers on preparation periods.

Comparisons with other Library Power schools nationally (tabulated by the University of Wisconsin evaluation team) show that 80 percent of Philadelphia's Library Power schools in the first cohort had no paid library support staff compared to 50 percent of their counterparts nationally. The number of teachers per library media staff member in the national sample was 27:1 while it was 45:1 in the Philadelphia Cohort 1 schools. The number of students per library media staff member in the Philadelphia school sites was 793:1, double that of Library Power schools nationally. The evaluators note that national professional guidelines recommend that there be one full-time librarian for each 300 students and an additional clerk at 600 students.[7]

Moreover, until Library Power, librarians had not been included in the externally-funded intensive professional development experiences offered to many Philadelphia teachers over the previous decade.[8] Systematic professional development experiences offered through the District have not existed outside of Library Power.

Librarians have functioned in most libraries as "glorified checkout ladies," as one librarian put it, operating on the periphery of the school's instructional program. Elementary teachers under the traditional system (the system that still exists in the District's non-Library Power schools) brought their students to the library for one period on a fixed weekly or bi-weekly schedule. Students had just a few minutes to select one book during that period and could not usually return to the library until the next scheduled class period. Teachers could not count on using the

---

[6] Association of Philadelphia School Librarians, *A Report on the State of School Libraries in the School District of Philadelphia*, May, 1997.

[7] Zweizig *et al.*

[8] See Elizabeth Useem, Judy Buchanan, Emily Meyers, Joanne Maule-Schmidt. *Urban Teacher Curriculum Networks and Systematic Change*, Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April, 1995.

library on an as-needed basis for student research in whole classes or small groups. Librarians ordered new materials without closely coordinating with teachers and with little overall knowledge of the sequence of curriculum units taught at each grade level. Students frequently arrived in the library to do research only to find out that little existed on that topic in the school's collection.

Library Power librarians reflected on their role under the "old system:"

> What did I do before? The kids came in and got one book and I stood and stamped books. During a fixed time with the teacher present, I tried to teach them library skills or read them a story. I covered 12 prep periods a week. I tried to integrate the classroom with the library [resulting] in some disjointed collaboration done on instinct.

> It was like a supermarket before where the class lines up at the door ready to get in and [I would say] 'Five minutes more to get your book out ... ring the bell ... It's time to leave ... Whatever book you have in your hand is your book.' When I was covering preps, what else was I to do? There was another class and another teacher's prep to come in. [And with classes] all I was able to really do was make up some kind of a fake little lesson so everyone was in a different volume of the encyclopedia. What can you really do with 33 students?

The "Non-negotiables" of the Grant

While Library Power could not alter staffing ratios, it set about to change the condition of the libraries and the role of the librarian in 30 of Philadelphia's schools. It did this in part by being strict about conditions for participation in the initiative. Schools applying to join Library Power had to meet the following criteria:

- The school had to have a full time certified library media specialist.
- The librarian could not be used to cover other teachers' preparation periods.
- The school had to match the collection acquisition money provided by the grant.
- The librarian had to be released from duties in order to attend monthly Library Power meetings for professional development.
- The principal or assistant principal had to attend Library Power team meetings.
- The principal and the school's Library Power team had to support the program's components as articulated by the funder: refurbishing, collection development and weeding of outdated books, independent checkout of books by students, teacher collaboration and curriculum mapping, and outreach to parents and community groups.

These "non-negotiables" set the stage for swift and comprehensive change in most of the 30 schools selected for participation in Library Power.

Library Power: Implementation of Key Components

Was Library Power able to change the way school libraries operate in the participating schools in Philadelphia? In a word, yes. Records generated by the librarians and ongoing visits by Library Power staff have shown that the schools have for the most part implemented key aspects of the initiative. Yet, as expected, levels of fidelity to the model varied by school. This section of the report looks at the experience of the seven case study schools in implementing the major points of the program. Librarians and principals were asked to rate the degree of implementation of a scale of 1 to 4 (1=no change; 2=a little change; 3=some change; 4=substantial change) and to answer a series of open-ended questions (see Appendix).

Refurbishing of the Library

The most visible change in Library Power schools is that the libraries have become inviting, child-centered spaces available for multiple activities. All seven of the librarians and principals claimed that substantial change had occurred in this area. Library Power funds provided for redesign and refurbishing of the libraries at an average cost per school of $5000. The schools' 4-5 person Library Power teams, assisted by architectural and design consultants, custom designed the space. Schools purchased area rugs, carpeting, shelving, comfortable love seats and arm-chairs, book carts, circulation desks, banners, vertical blinds, wall hangings, display cases, paperback stands, room dividers, computer tables, and shelving. Book collections were lowered so that children could reach them and spaces were re-arranged to accommodate different-sized groups.

Among all of the program's components, this one was the most fully implemented. Given the old and grim physical plants of most Philadelphia schools, the speedy creation of an attractive space was of critical importance in the initiative's success. Principals and librarians talked about the library as a new focal point for staff and community meetings and a place where they could show off the school. Students openly expressed their pleasure with the revitalized space. Librarians raved about the change:

> The biggest improvement is the way the library looks. As the children come in, they immediately notice the difference. I've been hearing a lot of 'Wow, look at the library!' And I just got new chairs. That's made a big difference in the way the children act when they come in the library ... They seem to be a lot more serious now and they realize that the library is important and that it has a specific purpose.

> Library Power has made a dramatic change in the physical outlay of our library. Before the program, we basically had nine tables and chairs, no shelving except for industrial shelving on one wall, and no circulation desk ... That's all we had.

> The kids now say it's the most professional-looking room in the building. They love it.

The impact of the refurbishing should be noted by urban school reformers: physical conditions matter enormously and should be a candidate for funding within the context of a school reform initiative. Small amounts of money for highly visible alterations can open the way to less tangible changes in school practices.

Collection Development and Curriculum Mapping

Library Power schools received an average of $6000 to purchase new books, software, and professional materials for teachers. Librarians "weeded" outdated books and other materials, ordered new collections that matched the curriculum actually being taught in the classrooms and that reflected the cultures of the school's student population. Like the refurbishing, the new materials were a highly popular feature of the initiative. A librarian described their impact:

> My biggest challenge was getting what I call the 'old head teachers' to use the library ... I think one of the problems then was that pre-Library Power, I really did not have much to offer them. Even though I had 14,000 books, most of them were outdated or did not support the curriculum. But with Library Power, the collection is wonderful. Teachers come in and 'ooh and aaah' ... It's been a tremendous help in getting the stubborn teachers into the library.

But librarians varied in the speed with which they ordered new items. During 1996-97, for example, two of the librarians (both in the "low implementation" sites) did not submit their book orders until late in the school year.

More difficult to implement was the requirement that teachers construct "curriculum maps" providing an overview of the school's instructional topics grade by grade and serving as a guide for the ordering of the updated library collection. Only three of the schools reported "substantial change" on this score with the rest specifying "some change." In the "high implementation" case study schools, teachers either cooperated with comparative speed and eagerness or the principals embraced the concept, integrating it into the school's regular staff development time. In one of the two "medium implementation" schools, the staff submitted curriculum maps of highly variable quality; in the other, the process evolved successfully over the three years as small learning communities formed and submitted maps as collective groups. In the two "low implementation" sites, teachers dragged their feet, submitting incomplete maps. In these schools, principals did not actively and consistently intervene to back up the librarians' requests for cooperation, demonstrating their incomplete understanding of the value of curriculum mapping for raising the school's academic standards.

In general, the process of curriculum mapping accelerated when librarians worked closely with newly-formed small learning communities—an approximation of schools within schools, a concept included in the School District's systemic reform agenda—or with grade groups rather than working directly with individual teachers.

Flexible Scheduling

In Library Power schools, students are expected to use the library as needed on an individual, group, or classroom basis. The elementary schools dropped the outmoded practice of having whole classes come to the library weekly or biweekly on a fixed schedule. The students could now use the library in many different ways: small group research, work on the computer, individual browsing and book checkout, and whole class lessons. All of the seven schools implemented this feature early on in the initiative, with six of them reporting "substantial change." In one of the "low implementation" schools, five teachers out of 33 fully utilized the flexible schedule and another five teachers ignored the library's services altogether once the scheduled visits were ended.

Elementary school librarians were enthusiastic about the switch to flexible scheduling and middle school librarians appreciated the greater emphasis on varied approaches to library use.

> When I would teach classes of children library skills and literature, I never really felt confident that they got it, particularly children whom I found out were behavior problems or had a hard time focusing in the classroom. When they would come down in a small group and work, some of those children came out with the most clear thoughts and really seemed to thrive on doing research. It created for them a style of learning that wasn't available in the classroom.

> Before this year, I had two types of patrons: full classes or a few kids in a group. Now teachers bring the whole class *first* and then groups come back to finish as needed. Finally they are using the library the right way ... I love it. Every period there are 20 to 50 kids here alone with me. They all sit and work ... And the [new] padded chairs help.

Student Use of the Library

Student use of the library was measured by one of the observing researchers over a two-day period during 1997 for this study. The researcher recorded the number of students using the library and the purpose of the students' visits. Overall, an average (mean) of 16 percent of the students came to the library on a given day. In one school, where recreational use of the library (e.g. computer games) was boosted by the library's shared space with the lunchroom, a little more than a third of the school's students (38 percent on one day; 33 percent on another) came to the library each day. Among the other six schools, usage ranged from 8 percent to 18 percent. Extrapolating these figures to arrive at a weekly use figure, one school had a student visit rate close to two visits a week; three schools had a student library visit rate averaging about one visit every week and a half; and in three others, students averaged visits about once every two weeks.[9] (See Table 1)

[9] Note that visits were recorded, not the identity of individual students. Some students came to the library more than once a week

A key question for Library Power evaluators is whether students are using the library more frequently than they were under the old inflexible schedule. The data from the observations indicate mixed results. In the two middle schools that had flexible schedules prior to Library Power, librarians report increased visits to the library: in one, students averaged 1.7 visits per week; in the other only .52 visits, about once every other week. Among the three elementary schools that formerly had a fixed *biweekly* schedule of student visits, thereby serving 50 percent of the students per week, the rate of student visits was about the same in one school (.53) but became significantly higher in two others (.73 and .75). In the two elementary schools having fixed *weekly* visits prior to Library Power (a rate of 100 percent), the rate of student visits dropped (.81 and .55). For elementary schools, then, rates of student use increased in two schools, stayed about the same in another, and dropped in the two that had previously had scheduled weekly visits. In those schools where rates dropped, however, a changed usage pattern has emerged: a handful of teachers never use the library and others use it with greater intensity than before.

Table 1
Student Use, Book Circulation, and Teacher Collaboration Rates By School

School	#Students	#Teachers	Weekly Rate of Student Visits	Weekly Rate of Book Circulation*	Percent of Teachers Collaborating
1	245	14	1.70	1.31	informal; all
2	1300	50	.73**	.72	24% & informal
3	1300	50	.53	.68	28
4	850	30	.75**	1.19	70
5	702	24	.55	.72	83
6	852	33	.55**	.52	24
7	350	13	.81	.90	50

*estimate: ratio calculated by dividing total number of books in circulation on a given day by the total enrollment ; students are expected to return books after one week or earlier

**classes previously visited library on biweekly basis

Overall, flexible scheduling has led to a more variable rate of use in Library Power schools that have not fully implemented the model. In those schools, the quality of students' involvement in library services and activities has improved but students whose teachers avoided the library once the old scheduled visits ended are using the library less. The fact that the number of student visits to the library has not dropped in any of the seven schools indicates that while some students no longer come at all, others are coming more frequently than before.

Patterns of Student Use

Why do students come to the library? Under the old system, elementary school students came to the library when directed for book checkout, a story reading, or instruction in library usage. Middle school students used the library for research and book checkout. Under the new system, students are more likely to come in small groups or individually for research, for browsing and book checkout or return, for work on the computer, and for independent reading.

Data recorded from the observations over a two-day period indicate that this shift in library use has indeed occurred in the "high" and "medium" implementation sites although the pattern of use varies somewhat among these five schools. In one of the schools (a middle school), student research is the predominant activity. Eighty percent of the students who were using the library were doing research. In one elementary school, students were engaged in both browsing and independent checkout as well as research. Many used their trip to the library for both purposes: 70 percent of those in the library were browsing for books on their own and 44 percent were engaged in research. In others, multiple activities were evident, including independent checkout and browsing, whole class visits, research and study.

The observational data from the "low implementation" sites confirmed that these schools had been slower to put key components of Library Power into effect. In one of these schools the library had become a hub of activity and a welcoming place for parents and students. Yet old practices were evident: whole class checkout of books, whole class lessons or storytelling, and frequent showings of videos and movies. In the other school, the library was underutilized and when it was used, activity centered on whole class book checkout and class lessons or storytelling. On each of the two observation days, the library was used by three whole classes, one small group, and a scattering of individual students.

Independent Checkout and Book Circulation

Closely related to flexible scheduling is the practice of having students check books out on their own. Not only does this have the practical advantage of freeing up the librarian for instructional and other tasks, it also develops students' autonomy and encourages them to take out books for fun. All but two of the schools reported "substantial" progress in implementing independent checkout. One of the middle school librarians made a brief stab at it but gave up when it led to greater confusion and difficulty. Several other Library Power middle schools have not implemented this component either. One of the "low implementation" case study elementary schools reported "some" change but the ethnographer recorded little evidence of the practice. The other "low implementation" site librarian reported "substantial" change in moving to independent

checkout, but again, the researcher observed that many children relied on the librarian or an adult assistant to check out books, even children who were "heavy users" of the library. In four of the case study schools, however, independent checkout has taken hold very successfully.

Librarians and their principals speak highly of the new checkout procedures, noting that students are now making more careful choices of books in an atmosphere that is less rushed and regimented than before. Librarians also commented on an increase in students' love of books and enjoyment in being in the library:

> One little first grader came up to me and said 'I would like an African folk tale,' and the teacher was so amazed she said, 'This never would have happened last year when we were so rushed—five minutes to choose your book—five minutes to check out. They're making intelligent choices. They're using their minds about what kind of book they want to read. We didn't think they could do that in the first grade. They are.'
>
> Their selection of books is more varied now. They used to have only a few minutes to find their book and they would all get Curious George or one of the Arthur books ... Now there is a more thoughtful choice process. They can wander and look and take more time. They get to know where the books are kept and know the areas.

Circulation

With flexible scheduling and independent checkout, are students checking out more books? This is a difficult question to answer because most of the librarians have not kept careful and complete circulation records. None of the schools had automated circulation. Independent checkout systems were designed for maximum independence of students and the minimal involvement of the librarian. In most schools, students recarded and checked out their own books and often even reshelved the books. Under these conditions, it was impossible to get an accurate count without time-consuming efforts on the part of the librarians. Library Power staff encouraged them to prioritize their time, focusing on teachers and students and not on calculating circulation.

The ethnographer in this study counted the numbers of books checked out on each of the two days she visited the school and recorded the total number of books in circulation, including overdue books and books checked out by teachers for their classrooms. These data refer to books, not students, and thus it is impossible to separate out the number of students who have checked out books at any given time. We know that some students check out several books at once. Further, the number of days students keep their books is uncertain, but we will assume a one week time frame for this analysis. Thus, the circulation figures here are estimates, not precise figures.

Under the old system operating in Philadelphia, circulation rates probably averaged close to one book per student on any given day, but many of those students attended elementary schools where book checkout occurred just once every two weeks. Further, many of those books prob-

ably remained unread since book selection was so hurried and controlled. The new system should promote actual reading since students are more likely to want the book they checked out.

As anticipated, circulation fell in the initial phases of the initiative when regularly-scheduled class visits were dropped and the new processes had not yet been fully adopted. Evaluation results from Year 1 showed that first cohort schools had mean weekly circulations of .54, significantly lower than the 1.02 figure registered by other Library Power schools nationally.[10] Results from this study show that the average mean circulations per week across the seven case study schools was .86, with schools ranging from .52 at one of the "low implementation" sites to 1.31 at a "high implementation" site.

Circulation figures in all but two of the case study schools are still below the ideal number of one or two books per student per week. Further, the rates are highly variable across schools: in two of the "high implementation" schools, mean weekly circulations exceed 100 percent of the school's enrollment and one of the "medium implementation" schools comes close to that rate (.90). In the two "low implementation" sites where only half the classes went to the library each week prior to Library Power, circulation appears to have either risen (.72) or have remained the same (.52). In one "medium implementation" middle school, mean weekly circulations equal .68 of the total student body, but the absence of pre-Library Power circulation figures makes it impossible to know if more books are being checked out. Curiously, mean weekly circulations in one of the "high implementation" elementary schools, where whole classes checked out books on a weekly basis before Library Power, has dropped to a .72 rate. The initiative in that school has focused more heavily on student research than on circulation.

It is too early to declare victory based on circulation figures but the success of some of the schools demonstrates the potential to increase circulation. It is important to note that circulation rates ultimately depend on teachers' understanding about the value of reading books as an avenue to full literacy. There is little a librarian can do if a teacher does not allow children to visit the library regularly nor promotes book circulation within the classroom. Low circulation is an indicator of a lack of understanding about the connection between the reading of books and improved reading scores.

A final point on circulation. In schools with high proportions of students whose first language is Spanish, the library collection needs to be well stocked with books written in Spanish. The two case study schools with bilingual student bodies had inadequate collections in this regard even though such books were in great demand by students. Thus, collection budgets for these schools need to be augmented to respond to this special need.

Collaboration

The heart of Library Power is the promotion of collaboration between the librarian and the teachers. Through collaboration, librarians were to move into a strategic role from their heretofore peripheral status in the teaching enterprise. In Library Power schools, teachers were to plan

[10] Zweizig et al., p. 17.

lessons and units together with the librarian. The advantages were obvious: teachers and librarians could brainstorm together about approaches to the unit; the librarian could let the teacher know what materials were available on the topic and arrange for their easy access; the librarian could encourage teachers to assign researchable projects with clear guidance for students; and the librarian could help teach aspects of the unit in the library and assist students with their research.

Collaborative planning and teaching were harder to implement than other aspects of the initiative although, with one exception, librarians' and principals' assessments of progress in this area became increasingly positive over the two years. By the third wave of interviews, all but one of the librarians reported there had been at least "some" progress in this area and two said there had been "substantial" progress. The self-reports were generally backed up by the ethnographer's review of the collaboration logs kept by the librarian. Data on the percentage of teachers with whom the librarian collaborated at least once during the year varied substantially across schools by the third year of the initiative. Number of years in the program did not affect collaboration rates.

Rates of Collaborative Planning:

High implementation schools (3): 70%; 83%; and informal collaboration with all teachers

Medium implementation schools (2): 28% and 50%

Low implementation schools (2): 24% and 24%

Librarians and principals spoke about the importance of the move to greater collaboration with teachers:

> The majority of the teachers this year are really, really collaborating because they are planning with me. They're changing the way they teach because they are asking themselves instead of 'What am I covering now?', 'What do I want my students to learn from this?'
>
> The collaboration is amazing. I see teachers in there asking questions of the librarian. The teachers will tell her they don't know much about a topic and they will ask her for help. The school's thematic unit style has been enhanced by the librarian. She made it work.
>
> A lot of times, teachers might give an assignment to students in the past without even checking to see of it was do-able ... The other day there was a math teacher who gave an assignment to have the kids research famous mathematicians, which I just dread every time the teachers give that assignment. And I said, 'Look, Joe,

Librarians as Teachers:
A Collaborative Project on Insects

In Library Power schools, librarians work with teachers on specific curricular projects. The project described here, observed by an ethnographer, illustrates the ways in which the librarian can assist school staff in planning and teaching.

The unit: A three-week collaborative project on insects taught by three kindergarten teachers and the librarian. By the end of the project, students were expected to be able to identify key features of insects, to react to insects, to classify insects as harmful or helpful, and to compare and contrast insects with other animals.

The nature of the collaboration: The role of the librarian in the effort was to assist in the planning and to identify and assemble relevant materials; to introduce the whole class to the unit; to help small groups of students draw an insect and write a fact about it; to assist small groups of students in using a CD-ROM and books to learn about insects; to help with art projects and displays; and to lead discussion at the culminating activity for the unit in the library.

Teachers came to the librarian with a clear sense of learning objectives but the actual planning was a mutual endeavor. The learning activities in the library were do-able and short, and the teachers felt free to take part in the classes held in the library when the librarian led the discussion.

Steps taken by the librarian to raise the academic standards of the unit: The librarian's involvement had the effect of creating a more substantive and interesting set of lessons. She did this by:

- focusing the project on concrete questions
- encouraging the teachers to be precise in specifying learning objectives and activities
- consistently pushing students to a higher level of thinking in discussions
- introducing students to multiple sources of information including videos, CD-ROMs, encyclopedias and other reference books
- involving students in a range of engaging learning activities including story telling, art and cooking projects, computer work, small group and whole group discussions
- making the culminating event a time for reflection as well as celebration

Overall, the effect of the project was to create a small learning community of school staff and to construct and teach a high-quality unit of instruction.

> it's a fine assignment to give, but here's a suggestion. Why don't you sit down this afternoon with me and let's see if it's do-able. Can you find materials? You're not gonna find all this stuff in the library.' And he had to admit that he had to remove some names and add some names ... He was able to revise his assignment so that the kids, when they came to the library, were able to find what they're looking for. There's nothing worse than having a kid come to the library and not find what they want, because they give up at the start.

Others noted the difficulty of planning with teachers:

> I collaborate with all the teachers but it is not as deep as I would like. I go to the resistant ones and do some things but they use me as a resource as opposed to real planning.

> I'm finding other people who are willing to try it but not on a continuous basis—just for awhile, it seems, and then pulling back a little bit. So I feel that I'm always the one making the initiative to go out and get the kids to come in.

The librarians' instruction in the library often centers on the research process itself. Their role is to plumb students' prior knowledge on a topic, to assist them in narrowing their research questions, to direct them to print and electronic reference materials, to teach specific note-taking strategies that will prevent them from copying directly from the references, and to teach and lead discussions on the actual content of a topic. Moreover, librarians are now organizing more rational use of the library, scheduling projects (e.g. projects for science fairs or for Black History month) so that they don't all occur at the same time and warning teachers away from assignments where few research materials exist.

Partnerships

Library Power succeeded in increasing partnerships between the school and community organizations and parent groups, but this was the least implemented aspect of the initiative. While two schools reported "substantial" progress in this aspect of the work, the others reported just "a little" or "some" change. Two schools reported a decline in such connections over the life of the project. The fact that the libraries in the School District are so understaffed made it difficult for librarians to find the time for community outreach. Nonetheless, the range of partnerships reported by these schools, aided by mini-grants awarded competitively through Library Power each year, was impressive in these seven schools. These activities varied from one school to the next and included:

- Forging stronger ties with the librarians from the branch public libraries;
- Expanding visits by civic leaders and local personalities;
- Connecting the work of Library Power with that of Americorps volunteers;

- Running MotheRead/FatheRead classes for parents and students (literacy skills and child development/ family empowerment issues);

- Providing placements for student teachers from the College of Information Science and Technology at Drexel University;

- Developing mentor relationships between middle school and kindergarten students.

Professional Development for Librarians

Educational researchers have long been interested in the extent to which professional development can change the practices of school personnel. Library Power offers a rich case study of this issue since participating librarians were offered intensive professional development opportunities over the life of the initiative and since the degree of change in their practice is relatively easy to document. The topics addressed at their gatherings included information on collection development, curriculum mapping processes, techniques for developing students' research and writing skills, internet training, approaching the change process, ideas for redesign and refurbishing, and methods for implementing independent checkout.

The professional development opportunities took several forms: an initial one-week summer institute for both cohorts and a final summer institute at Drexel University focusing on internet training; monthly lunch and afternoon meetings of the librarians to hear speakers and exchange experiences; customized professional development at the school sites; attendance at national conferences for selected participants; and individual technical assistance offered by the Philadelphia Education Fund Library Power staff. The latter's support included advice on ordering books and software and devising independent checkout systems, help with weeding outdated books, and even assistance in painting and assembling furniture. Further, 80 mini-grants ($750-$1000 each) launched projects with other teachers and partner organizations that furthered the librarians' learning. For some librarians, the experience of applying for the mini-grants was their first experience with grant writing.

As noted in the interim report, librarians and principals praised the efficiency, expertise, and collegial approach of Sandra Hughes, the Library Power Director at the Fund. Indeed, the professional librarians association in Philadelphia honored Ms. Hughes in 1997 by presenting her with its annual award for outstanding service. The fact that she was an experienced librarian and administrator enabled her to give very specific and directed support. A principal articulated the value of the professional development and support:

> You can't ask the librarians to be the hub of the school and not support them. If the librarians are to be replenished, someone has to be there to encourage interactions among them. Library Power did that in a *focused* way ... It was good to have Sandra Hughes as a critical friend. She *knows* us and asks the critical questions. And it was good to say [to the staff] that this is a national effort and not a local harebrained scheme—not some silly twaddle I thought of.

Librarians' daily practice has changed substantially in all but one of the seven case study schools. They are spending less time doing mundane clerical tasks such as book checkout and are much more involved in planning with teachers and working with students. By coming out from behind their circulation desks and focusing their attention on small groups of students, librarians are, in effect, reducing class size. Librarians in this initiative have also become more assertive and more self-confident in garnering resources for the library, reaching out to partner groups, and making suggestions to teachers and teams of teachers.

Comments from the interviews and focus groups bear this out:

> I feel like a teacher for a change, not a warden.
>
> The way the staff looks at me now is totally different ... Now they feel I have a brain in my head and consult with me. I tell them, 'this project won't work, try this.' I am stronger in my input. I am requested to be on every committee ... I feel important in the school.
>
> I feel like more of a professional. I was a teacher for 15 years and through Library Power I've been able to clarify what style of teaching is right for children and I feel more knowledgeable about my ideas on education. I have a focus now on how children should learn.

Factors Affecting Degree of Implementation

Four factors were put forth in the interim report as plausible explanations for variations in implementation of Library Power among the schools: the support of the principal; the professional and interpersonal skills of the librarian; the state of the school's professional collaborative culture; and the school's size and organizational complexity. Our research during 1996-97 confirmed the importance of these four variables. No additional factors were identified. (Table 2)

Principals' Support for the Initiative

The key role of principals in change efforts has been highlighted by numerous researchers and in evaluations of the Philadelphia Education Fund's other initiatives. In four of the five "high" and "medium" implementation Library Power sites, principals actively promoted the initiative with their staffs. In these cases, the librarian and the principal raved about the other's value to the school. In both of the "low" implementation sites and one of the "medium" schools, principals did not give the effort their full support, a source of deep disappointment to the librarians.

The degree to which curriculum mapping, flexible use of the library, and teacher collaboration moved forward depended heavily on the vigor of the principal's support. Principals needed to stress—even require—that teachers complete the maps, send their students to the library, and plan collaboratively with the librarian. This was particularly important in schools lacking a

strong collegial professional culture. Some principals used the school's professional development time for curriculum mapping and collaborative planning. But other principals never fully understood the concept and potential of the model and, for that and other reasons, looked the other way when some teachers failed to cooperate with the librarian or to use the library in *any* way, including book checkout.

In one school, the new principal explained that Library Power was not at the top of her priorities because there were so many immediate needs at the school. In another school, the principal questioned whether the librarian herself was fully committed to implementing the initiative and was thus reluctant to make Library Power a central component of the school's reform agenda. In a third school, the principal waxed enthusiastic about the program's impact but did nothing to insure that teachers among his fractured staff participated in it.

Overall, principals who pushed Library Power were those who understood its role in changing teaching and learning, who believed they had skillful librarians, who were not overwhelmed with immediate crises, and who themselves were pro-active problem solvers capable of "thinking outside the box."

Table 2
Factors Affecting Level of Library Power Implementation

Level of Implementation:	**School Site Factors:**			
	Support of Principal	Skills and Support of Librarian	Collegial Professional Support Culture	School Size
High				
School #1	++	++	++	small
School #2	++	++	++	medium*
School #3	++	++	+	medium
Medium				
School #4	++	++	+	large
School #5	-	++	-	small
Low				
School #6	+	++	-	large
School #7	+	-	-	medium

++ = strongly facilitates implementation
+ = facilitates implementation
- = hinders implementation

* "medium sized" schools were actually quite large (700-850 students) for elementary schools

The Skill and Commitment of the Librarian

Individuals matter in school reform. In the case of Library Power, the skill and dedication of the librarian were critical to its success in schools. In the five "high" and "medium" implementation sites, the librarians energetically applied themselves to the effort. They reached out aggressively and collegially to teachers, took full advantage of the professional development opportunities of the grant, and demonstrated skill in carrying out the administrative and teaching duties of their job. As one principal put it, "a lot of the success here is due to the *personality* of the librarian."

In one of the "low implementation" schools, the librarian was very effective in creating a vibrant library that was a physically attractive and welcoming place for children and parents. Her warm interactions with children acted as a spur to their desire to read, thus boosting book circulation. In many ways, then, the initiative succeeded at the school. Library Power did not reach its full potential there, however, primarily because of the other conditions cited here—the lack of resources for a school of its size, less than full support from the principal, and an absence of a collegial community of teaching professionals. Given this situation, even a highly skilled librarian would have had great difficulty coping with the demands of the job. Yet the fact that the librarian was not as adept at organizational tasks as she was at other aspects of the work added to the difficulty of program implementation.

In another "low implementation" site, the librarian oversaw the successful refurbishing of the library and expansion of the collection, and was pleased to be performing more of a teaching role. She had conducted some very effective collaborative units with a handful of teachers. Yet she did not demonstrate the high level of energy or initiative required to make the program work in a large, under-resourced school.

The case study research also revealed the importance of librarians' need to be bilingual in those schools where a large proportion of the student body speaks a language other than English. Librarians in two of the schools were handicapped by their inability to speak Spanish with students and their parents. Further, much of the daily banter among staff in these schools is in Spanish, further isolating the non-Spanish speaking librarians.

The Collegial Professional Culture of the School

Library Power worked best in schools where there was an already-existing collaborative culture among faculty focused on student learning. In two of the three high implementation schools, faculty and administrators were used to working in a host of cooperative ways, a culture nurtured in part by a series of previous grants from the Philadelphia Education Fund. Library Power took hold at these schools quickly and significantly enhanced their reform efforts. In the third "high" site, teachers interacted in a friendly way with one another but were busy with a range of disconnected projects and unused to collaborating extensively around curriculum and instruction. It was Library Power itself that created a more cohesive instructionally-focused faculty there. Indeed, Library Power can probably take credit for beginning a process of whole-school change at that site.

The two "medium" implementation schools faced different challenges. In one, a highly competent librarian was able to increase book circulation among students, in part through a very effective independent checkout system, but was stymied in reaching some of the teachers because of bitter divisions within the faculty, divisions that were not attended to by the principal or the teachers' union. A handful of the teachers refused to even set foot in the library, sending their students instead to get books for them. In the other, a large complex middle school, collegially-oriented small learning communities were being organized under the direction of a highly-regarded new principal during the life of the initiative, and the new stability and collective focus on learning was just becoming evident during 1996-97.

Library Power was hard to implement in the two "low" sites in part because their faculties were not used to working together and included a number of teachers who were new to the school or who were resistant to change. In one of the schools, teachers would sign up in advance to come to the library so that the principal would think they were coming. In fact, they often failed to show up at the assigned time. In the other school, its sheer size, the existence of cliques among the faculty, and administrative and faculty turnover ("a lot of people don't know each other here") undercut attempts to pull the faculty together.

School Size and Organizational Complexity

School size mattered too. "With 1300 kids, size *is* an issue," emphasized one principal. As we argued in the interim report, there comes a point at which sheer lack of resources can blunt the impact of an initiative such as Library Power. In large schools, it is not possible for librarians to collaborate with all teachers individually. As one middle school librarian put it, "If I ever get a hundred percent cooperation, I'll have to get another life."

In middle schools, size is compounded by organizational complexity and by higher proportions of students with behavioral and academic difficulties. Of the two middle schools in this study, the "high implementation" site was unusually small (245 students) and the other, a "medium implementation" site, had successfully organized its 1300 students into small learning communities, a feature that mitigated the school's size. Overall, however, Library Power middle schools had greater difficulty implementing the effort than the elementary schools.

Both of the "low implementation" schools had sizable student bodies. In one of these, an elementary school with 1300 students, the librarian was saddled with an impossible workload. She was expected to help the students and staff without any assistance (with the exception of an Americorps volunteer for one year); serve as technology coordinator for the school, requiring her to trouble shoot broken printers and computers during the day, among other tasks; attend grade group and small learning community meetings; and oversee production and duplication of notices between home and school. In addition, this librarian voluntarily stayed after school, enabling students and parents to use the library for an extended time. It is no wonder she was unable to make much headway with collaborative planning with teachers. The librarian acknowledged her exasperation:

> I don't usually have a lunch time. We just started this new program where we are going to try to get 20 kids during each lunch period to come to the library. And that's 80 kids during our lunch periods which last pretty much all day. And I'm alone, by myself. And on top of that, I'm supposed to be the support person for this emotional support group, emotional support that I need!

Small size, of course, is not perfectly correlated with Library Power success. In one small elementary school, the lack of administrative leadership and the divisions among the teachers prevented the initiative from reaching a high level of implementation. Thus all four factors discussed here need to be considered together when thinking about program success.

Policy Issues

All reform initiatives in large urban school districts are confronted by a host of organizational and political barriers endemic to the turbulent environments of such districts. Library Power was no exception. Some of the more significant barriers included:

- **Money**. Budget shortfalls in the District and the looming specter of massive budget cuts limited the District's ability to fully support Library Power's implementation and institutionalization.

- **People**. Personnel issues plagued many schools: frequent turnover of principals and assistant principals; the hiring of large numbers of new teachers; high rates of teacher absenteeism coupled with the inability of some schools to attract enough substitutes thereby putting pressure on the librarian to cover teachers' preparation periods.

- **Time**. Library Power teams in many schools were barely viable partly because of a lack of meeting time during or after the school day. In Philadelphia this problem is exacerbated by the comparatively short school day and year as well as the entrenched contractual provision that requires teachers to be paid if they attend after-school or weekend meetings outside of specified hours. The funder did not allow the grant to cover stipends for such meetings.

- **Visibility**. Library Power was a comparatively small initiative in the context of a District with a $1.4 billion operating budget. In its first two years it did not get the attention from school and district leaders that it did in some smaller school systems.

At the same time, Library Power had the advantage of being implemented simultaneously with the systemic reform plan promoted by the District and its Superintendent, David W. Hornbeck. His *Children Achieving* agenda included a push for higher academic standards and achievement for students along with increased professional development for teachers, goals that dovetailed with those of Library Power. The Hornbeck administration supported the effort to institutionalize Library Power by pressuring middle-level administrators to find the money for the participating schools to continue freeing their librarians from coverage of teachers' preparation periods once the core grant ended.

Compared to other school-change initiatives of its kind, Library Power was more successful than most in forging ahead with implementation. To a large extent, its success was due to the "non-negotiables" required of participating schools. The fact that principals had to agree up front to exempt the librarian from covering teachers' preparation periods, to allocate school funds to collection development, to release the librarian for professional development, and to support the initiative's programmatic components (e.g. weeding the collection, flexible scheduling) greatly speeded up and deepened execution of the effort. The dictates of the grant aided outreach to teachers as well. As one principal noted:

> The term 'curriculum mapping' started with Library Power here. Sometimes it is helpful to have an outside agency say 'You have to do this.' New ideas float better if you say it is a national movement ... there are non-negotiables about *what* to do. Then you can work on the *how* together.

In retrospect, although the funder and providers of technical assistance were more farsighted than most in constructing conditions for schools' participation in the grant, they probably underestimated the power of district-level barriers.

Library Power and Academic Standards

It became evident in the course of this study that librarians a) have a unique vantage point on curricular and instructional practices in a school and b) can play a key role in rationalizing the scope and sequence of the curriculum and the quality and execution of teachers' assignments. It is librarians who notice and are sometimes appalled by the repeated teaching of the same topic from grade to grade or even within the same teaching team in one grade. It is they who must deal with bewildered students whose teachers have assigned research reports with vague topics and little direction. It is they who see some teachers accept children's work that has been copied directly from an encyclopedia or the computer. And they are the ones who sometimes pick up on outright misinformation in an assignment.

The Library Power model, when fully implemented, can help overcome these critical barriers to student learning. Indeed, this is what we observed in the "high and medium implementation" case study schools. The librarian had become a kind of "keeper of the curriculum," a person who could identify gaps and overlaps in the course of study through the curriculum mapping process. As one of the District's professional development facilitators put it:

> The librarian has become the way to organize the collaboration for the curriculum of the school. We are all too busy—so many leaders in the school are doing discipline. We have kept the librarian 'pure' to work on the collaboration of the curriculum.

In these schools, librarians worked hard to raise the level of rigor in the research process. They trained students to take notes without copying verbatim from sources, techniques acquired from Library Power training. The librarians encouraged students to begin their research with print materials rather than jumping immediately into prolonged and unfocused electronic searches.

When students in upper grades arrived at the library with a topic identical to that of a lower grade student, librarians tried to build a higher standard of inquiry and evidence into the assignment. These are obviously serious and deepseated challenges for schools, and librarians cannot solve these issues by themselves. But Library Power provided a vehicle and an opening for addressing these questions.

Conclusions

Library Power has left its mark on nearly all of the 30 participating schools. In the seven case studies reported here, teachers and librarians are collaborating with greater frequency in ways that raised the quality of assignments and of students' research and writing. The libraries have become more attractive and accessible and have collections that spark student interest and facilitate student research. Curriculum mapping and systematic collection development have spurred some of the participating schools to scrutinize their curriculum. Connections to community and parent groups, including the local branches of the Free Library, have helped revitalize and extend library services.

To be sure, implementation levels have varied by school. From what we can tell, Library Power took hold most quickly in small to medium-sized schools with a supportive principal, a committed and energetic librarian, and a staff of teachers who were used to talking to one another about children and learning. The initiative was more successful in elementary schools than middle schools. Certain components were more easily implemented than others. Librarians moved quickly to refurbish the library, to discard old books and buy new ones, and to teach children how to check out their own books. They encountered more difficulty in constructing curriculum maps with the staff, collaborating with teachers, and getting the teachers to come to the library on a flexible schedule. Developing continuous partnerships with outside groups was harder still.

The evidence on rates of student visits to the library and book circulation in the seven case study schools is mixed but encouraging. Schools' rates of student visits varied from close to twice a week (one school) to about one visit per week (three schools) to approximately once every two weeks (three schools). The overall number of visits did not appear to decline in any of the schools but the pattern of use changed: some students were using the library more intensively while others, whose teachers chose not to come to the library under flexible scheduling, did not come at all. Students' reasons for coming to the library changed as well under Library Power with more students coming in small groups or as individuals for research, browsing, and book checkout. In two schools mean weekly circulations exceeded the school's total enrollment and a third came close to that. In the four others, circulation rates varied from .52 to .72 of total enrollment, still low but most likely the same or better than they were prior to the initiative.

In sum, the library's resources remain underutilized but the quality of students' use of the library has improved. Indeed, librarians cited students' new love of reading as the most rewarding aspect of the initiative.

Librarians were also gratified by the change in their roles in the school and pointed to the professional development experiences provided by Library Power through the Philadelphia Education Fund as especially worthwhile in assisting that change. Unlike many attempts at professional development, this initiative resulted in actual changes in behavior with librarians redefining their core activities in a more professional direction. Initial fears that the effort would lead to burnout by some librarians proved to be unfounded. Moreover, this cadre of librarians has formed a new professional network in the District able to provide training to staff in other schools.

Philadelphia's Library Power initiative is being extended for an additional year through a $40,000 institutionalization grant awarded by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. This grant will enable the Philadelphia Education Fund to continue professional development activities for the Library Power librarians, including intensive individual assistance to librarians at schools where implementation has been slow. The grant will also connect this effort with the work of the District's internal professional development delivery system, the Teaching and Learning Network. Two of the thirty original schools (neither a case study school) chose not to accept the new grant's requirements of continued school support thereby dropping out of the initiative. In one case, the principal felt that the librarian's lackluster effort rendered the initiative ineffective and unworthy of further school support; in the other case, the school staff itself voted not to continue with the initiative despite energetic efforts at implementation by the librarian.

Seven schools that were not part of the original grant have decided to adopt the Library Power model in 1997-98 and to pay for it out of their own school funds. This step is highly unusual in a system strapped for resources. And six other schools identified by the District as low performing (the Quest Schools) have begun adopting the Library Power model as well. Such spontaneous dissemination provides evidence of the model's underlying magnetism and strength.

Library Power's appeal can be attributed to its common-sense focus on student learning and on people's desire to work and learn in an attractive space with materials that support classroom assignments. The initiative's immediate visibility—a redesigned and refurbished space, an enhanced and updated collection, and ready access—led to greater cooperation from the school community. Requirements imposed by the funder, particularly the exemption of the elementary school librarians from coverage of other teacher's classes and the monthly early-release of librarians for professional development, also propelled implementation.

Besides the need to disseminate Library Power to new schools, the challenge in future years among the participating schools will be to widen the circle of collaborating teachers, to conduct schoolwide intensive curriculum mapping, to increase book circulation, and to document success in terms of improved student achievement. A final and formidable challenge will be to maintain schools' financial commitment to the effort despite the prospect of increased fiscal austerity

Capsule Summaries

Case Study Schools

HIGH IMPLEMENTATION SITES

Morris Middle School*

A small (245 students) alternative middle school with a history of innovation, Morris Middle School took full advantage of Library Power to deepen and extend its school reform efforts. Flexible scheduling was already in place prior to the initiative. Both the principal and librarian understood the goals and potential of Library Power and moved quickly to implement nearly all of its components. Refurbishing, collection development, and independent checkout proceeded with alacrity. Curriculum mapping, which evolved slowly and thoughtfully, was used by the principal as a key tool in planning and rationalizing the school's instructional program, particularly since teacher teams began "looping" with the same set of students over a three-year period. The principal devoted staff development time during the school year and in the summer for this purpose.

The librarian's role was substantially upgraded as she undertook collaborative projects with teachers, began working with all of the school's small learning communities, and became integrally involved in schoolwide curriculum planning efforts. Student use of the library (which shared space with the lunch room!) increased to an average of 1.7 visits per week per student, although these trips included recreational use of the computer during lunch. Book circulation went up dramatically (1.31 books out per student on given day) once independent checkout was introduced. The energetic and skilled librarian assumed a leadership role in the emerging district-wide Library Power network.

Holland Elementary School

The Holland staff took up Library Power with enthusiasm. A large elementary school (850 students), the school has been the site of numerous externally-funded school improvement efforts that have built a sense of community and bolstered student achievement. The initiative was aided by a strongly supportive principal and by the fact that the teachers respected the librarian's competence and hard work. The librarian relished her more professionalized role and became a leader in Library Power dissemination efforts across the District.

Of all the schools in Library Power, this one implemented the initiative with the greatest fidelity to the entire model. Book circulation soared with independent checkout, flexible scheduling, and the new books (to a 1.19 per student weekly rate of circulations) and the rate of student visits to the library (.75 visits per week) exceeded that of the old fixed biweekly class visit schedule. Nearly three-fourths of the teachers collaborated with the librarian on curriculum projects, and the librarian worked closely with small groups of students on the research process. The librarian met regularly with the school's small learning communities, with grade groups, and with individual teachers.

The redesigned space became a focal point of the school. Critical assistance with carding and shelving was supplied daily by a cadre of fourth graders trained as "junior librarians." Student

* All school names are pseudonyms.

teachers from the Drexel University Library and Information Science program were assigned to the school and other community partnerships were developed as well. The principal believed that Library Power had made an important contribution to increased student reading, a stronger curriculum, and higher test scores. Indeed, Holland registered the highest standardized test scores of the elementary schools in its cluster for 1996.

Maury Elementary School

Library Power kicked off a process of whole school change at Maury, exceeding the expectations of the grant. The staff at the large (702 students) elementary school had a history of collegial staff relations and innovative projects but prior to Library Power, the school did not have a coherent school improvement effort or a collaborative school culture focused on student learning. The school's librarian implemented all aspects of the model during its first year of activity, supported by a new principal who participated eagerly in district-wide Library Power events and who required that teachers collaborate with the librarian.

The physical appearance of the library was dramatically improved with refurbishing. It became a beehive of activity, accommodating whole classes, small groups, and individuals in a comparatively small space. The new collection, whose acquisition was guided by the curriculum mapping process, and the new practice of independent checkout attracted students and teachers. While rates of student visits (.55 per week) remained about the same—the school had had biweekly class visits prior to Library Power—book circulation increased to about .72 circulations per student per week and students clearly enjoyed the chance to browse and select books with care.

The most powerful aspect of the initiative at Maury was the collaboration between the librarian and the teachers, with nearly all of the teachers developing lessons and units with the librarian. The librarian devoted herself to intensive work with small groups of students undertaking research projects, teaching them an array of research skills and ratcheting up the academic standards of the projects themselves. Under her tutelage, students moved from a passive to a more active learning style.

Library Power led to a whole set of related initiatives at the school: closer ties to the local library, outreach to parents through a MotheRead and other programs, more careful curriculum planning within the school's new small learning communities, new experience among teachers in grant-writing (the school received four mini-grants through Library Power), new relationships between specialist teachers (art, music, physical education) and the library, and strong curriculum support from the librarian for three teachers undertaking multi-year "looping" with their students.

MEDIUM IMPLEMENTATION SITES

Day Middle School

The changes brought about by Library Power at this large complex school (1300 students) augmented and reinforced a broader school improvement process undertaken by a visionary principal. Selected components of the initiative were implemented at this school but the inability of the highly-competent librarian and the school team to move to full implementation shows the limits of what can be done in such a large under-resourced school. Still, the school is very proud of Library Power and the librarian, now a valued key member of the school staff, anticipates further utilization of its practices in the coming year.

The physical improvement in the library, especially the addition of 60 new padded chairs and other furniture, has made it a much more attractive and functional center of school activity. A critical core of fruitful collaborative efforts between the librarian and teachers have occurred (28 percent of the teachers), and that proportion is increasing as the librarian works more closely with the school's eight small learning communities. Independent checkout was tried and dropped. Flexible scheduling already existed prior to Library Power, the case in all of the middle schools. Few new community partnerships were undertaken. Because the librarian serves so many students with so little additional personnel support, she is simply unable to carry out all of Library Power's programmatic components.

While overall rates of student visits (.53 per week) and book circulation (.68 weekly circulations per student) are not high, the library is used extensively for research purposes by whole classes and by small groups of students. Indeed, the ethnographer observed that almost all the students using the library were there to do research. The acquisition of new books and materials matched to the curriculum has resulted in significantly increased use of the library for research purposes by the teachers and students. Before Library Power, the librarian had very little to offer in the way of relevant and up-to-date materials. Thus the careful targeting of funds in an initiative such as this has provided direct support for enhanced student learning.

Carr Elementary School

Carr provides a fascinating example of a school that was close to having a showcase Library Power model but fell short in implementation because of poor school leadership and a deeply fractured faculty. A small school by Philadelphia standards (350 students), the school has been identified as one of the District's lowest performing and has received some support in its change efforts from the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

The Carr librarian instituted a highly successful independent checkout system, a major factor in the school's respectable circulation rate (averaging almost one book per week per child) and rate of students' visits to the library (.81 visits per week). The ethnographer noted that the children looked at an average of ten books before selecting a book and would sometimes read them to

each other for fun. The refurbished library was a showcase for the school. Rates of teacher collaboration were high as well: during the first year of the initiative, the librarian worked with nearly all of the teachers in some sort of collaboration. The following year, she worked with half the teachers in meaningful projects and the other half in less formal ways.

Yet splits in the faculty undermined efforts at substantive curriculum mapping and more comprehensive collaboration. Some faculty avoided the library and shied away from collaborative projects, preferring to use the librarian just as a resource. The librarian was not included in meetings of small learning community staff. The principal did not take active steps to address staff divisions nor did he make an effort to insure that teachers participated in curriculum mapping or collaborative planning.

LOW IMPLEMENTATION SITES

Woodson Elementary School

In certain respects, Library Power succeeded in this large elementary school (1300 students). The redesigned and refurbished library became the hub of school activities. Children flocked to the library which they viewed as a warm and welcoming place. Parents too felt free to check out books, attend parent literacy workshops, or use the computers. Rates of students visits (.73 per week) and circulation (.72) are in the medium range among the case study schools. The librarian strongly supported the initiative and thrived on the professional development experiences. The frequency of meaningful collaboration, however, was low with less than a quarter of the teachers working closely with the librarian on a unit. Flexible scheduling and independent checkout had been put in place, but the ethnographic observations revealed that many students did not know how to check out their own books.

The library itself was used for multiple purposes by the school in ways that sometimes detracted from attempts to create a learning enrvironment there. Classroom aides used the space to work with small groups of students; the counsellor and principal used it to talk to individual students; and the teachers sometimes used it as a place to eat lunch or chat with other teachers. Further, because of its location in the center of the second floor, whole classes trooped through it to get from one side of the building to the other. In other words, the library was seen as the primary free space in a crowded building.

Despite the librarian's strengths and some support from the principal, the initiative in this school achieved just a "low" rating primarily because a single librarian could not possibly handle such a workload well, including the requirement that she also serve as the school's technology coordinator. Volunteers did not provide the kind of consistent support that was needed, with the exception of an Americorps volunteer during the last year of the initiative. Moreover, the librarian's strengths centered on working well with children, not in running a complex organizational environment. Add to that the problems of working in a high-poverty bilingual school marked by significant staff and administrative turnover and lacking a collegial professional culture and it becomes clear why Library Power could not achieve full implementation.

Hammond Elementary School

The Library Power program had a disappointing record of implementation at this elementary school serving a primarily bilingual student population (852 students). The physical refurbishing, weeding of outdated books, and acquisition of new books and materials were important accomplishments, but the library was underutilized. Rates of student visits (an average of .55 per week) and book ciruculation (.52 per student) were low. The small numbers of books in Spanish contributed to the low circulation figures. The rate of teacher collaboration was low as well although as many as one fourth of the teachers had had successful experiences collaborating with the librarian on a unit. The librarian enjoyed her role as a teacher in these efforts.

An independent checkout system was in place but the observational evidence revealed that some students did not feel comfortable checking out their own books. The librarian made little effort to reach out to community or parent groups. She sometimes missed professional development sessions organized for Library Power librarians.

The librarian felt unsupported by the principal and, on her part, the principal believed the librarian lacked the commitment and energy to make Library Power a success. When the principal put pressure on the teachers to collaborate, a number of teachers signed up to come to the library but then, with no advance warning, failed to keep the appointment, a phenomenon noticed both by the ethnographer and a library volunteer who was interviewed for this study. Other classes would show up unexpectedly. Collaboration logs kept by the librarian showed the same pattern. By early January, for example, there were 22 instances since the school year began where teachers had signed up for a library period and but then did not show up. Four classes had not visited the library all year and several had visited only once or twice.

The initiative at this school, then, faced multiple barriers that stymied implementation.

Appendix

Library Power Interview Questions with Librarians

Initial questions asked for information on years in the school, in the District, position, attendance at Library Power events and training experiences. Respondents were also asked to evaluate the quality of each of those events and training institutes.

The following check list was used in all rounds of interviewing with librarians (3 separate times) and with principals (2 times). Respondents checked off a category and then elaborated on their answer.

Assessment of Degree of Progress in the following areas *as a result of Library Power*:

	None	A Little	Some	Substantial
refurbishing	1	2	3	4
collection development	1	2	3	4
flexible scheduling	1	2	3	4
collaborative planning	1	2	3	4
independent checkout	1	2	3	4
creation of partnerships	1	2	3	4
changed role of librarian	1	2	3	4

Open-ended questions for librarians (round one):

1. How often have you received help from Philadelphia Education Fund staff at your school for Library Power?

2. How would you evaluate the quality of that assistance?

3. How would you evaluate the usefulness of the cross-school Library Power events you have attended? (monthly meetings; cross-school visits; librarians support groups; Summer Institute)

4. How would you rate the usefulness of the refurbishing and design consultants provided through Library Power?

*5. How much support have you received from your principal with regard to the Library Power initiative? (attendance at meetings, freeing up time to meet with teachers, support at staff meetings, moral support, giving LP visibility and priority, augmenting funds, connecting to the School Improvement Plan and other initiatives)

6. In what ways have you received support from School District personnel (e.g. visits to your schools, attendance at kickoff at the school or other events)?

7. To what degree is a network of librarians being created in this District as a result of Library Power?

*8. Overall, what aspects of Library Power have been most meaningful for you personally?

9. What do you think will happen to that network and to Library Power efforts once funding ends? What factors will influence its future?

*asked in Rounds Two and Three as well

Additional questions asked in Rounds Two and/or Three:

1. What degree of collegiality exists among the staff when it comes to a focus on school improvement?

2. What is your relationship to small learning communities in the school? to other governance and planning mechanisms existing in the school?

3. What plans do you have for implementing Library Power further next year?

Questions for Principals: Round One

(in addition to checklist above used with the librarians)

1. To what extent have you participated in Library Power meetings and events at your school or at cross-school meetings (name specific meetings). How useful were those meetings?

2. In what other ways have you been able to support Library Power (see specific prompts in question #5 above)?

3. What are the most serious barriers Library Power has had to confront in trying to meet its objectives? How have you tried to deal with these?

4. What will happen to Library Power in your school once funding ends?

Round Two

(in addition to checklist)

1. What specific methods have you used to encourage teachers to cooperative in submitting curriculum maps?

2. What specific methods have you used to encourage teachers to collaborate with the librarian in planning lessons and units?

3. In what ways have components of Library Power become integrated into the School Improvement Plan and the ongoing life of the school?

4. What aspects of Library Power will endure even if further funding from Dewitt Wallace-Readers' Digest is not forthcoming?

5. What funding resources are available from the school that might be used to support Library Power in future years? Have any steps been taken thus far to insure such support?

6. What aspects of the initiative are least likely to survive termination of the Dewitt Wallace-Readers' Digest grant?

Focus Group Questions for Librarians

1. Can you share with us one anecdote about the impact that Library Power has had on a child or group of children at your school?

2. Describe a specific challenge that you have overcome in the course of this grant.

3. Tell me about the degree to which you are making progress in collaborative planning with teachers. What percent collaborate now and how might that change this year?

4. What is the biggest hurdle you face now in implementing Library Power?